

3-2009

III. Belonging to the Congregation

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Recommended Citation

(2009). III. Belonging to the Congregation. *Anima Una*, 62 (62). Retrieved from <https://dsc.duq.edu/anima-una/vol62/iss62/7>

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Generally speaking, the idea of the last General Chapter to intensify the dialogue between the north and the south regarding finances must be continued.

III. BELONGING TO THE CONGREGATION

3.1 SPIRITUAL RENEWAL OF THE CONGREGATION

INTRODUCTION

Four years ago at Torre d’Aguilha, capitulants at the General Chapter saw the need for spiritual renewal of our Congregation. This recognition had been prepared by preceding General Chapters, the celebration of the Spiritan Year and, more proximately, by the pre-capitular document, “Authentically Living our Spiritan Charism Today”. The theme of the General Chapter “Faithful to the gift entrusted to us” (1Tim 6, 20) helped us focus on ourselves as agents of evangelisation and identify various tasks that needed attention. The indications were clear that we were at a critical point in our history as a Spiritan family. With the establishment of the Centre for Spiritan Studies at Duquesne after the General Chapter, the General Council saw it as the organ that would prepare specialists in Spiritan spirituality and studies, publish materials for Spiritan studies, promote research into our founders and history, design a systematic programme of Spiritan studies for our communities of formation, establish a comprehensive Spiritan resource library, etc. The Centre has already laid down solid foundations on which we continue to build as individual Spiritans and as a family. At Ariccia, four years after Torre d’Aguilha, delegates at the Enlarged General Council continued with the

reflection on the spiritual renewal of our Spiritan family and identified the following tasks for the next four years.

3.1.1 Programme for the Next Four Years

Tercentenary of Poullart des Places: The Superior General will write a letter to announce this celebration which will be at Congregation and circumscription level. Special activities to mark the anniversary: hold conferences; special prayers and novenas be composed and done in circumscriptions; do special pilgrimages (Rennes, Paris); translate Volume four of 'Memoire Spiritaine'; a special issue of 'Spiritan Horizons' will be published; a CD on Poullart des Places will be produced; an internet space will be created; EGC suggested material for Poullart's centenary in three languages; one group asked for a centralised website. A special feature of the celebration will be to make the history of the Congregation from 1709 to 1848 better known and to highlight des Places' choice for poverty; one issue of 'Spiritan News' will be dedicated to Poullart des Places. Some kind of networking could be arranged to allow ideas and material to be exchanged between Provinces; create a committee to co-ordinate the whole thing as was done for 'Histories and Anniversaries'.

Identifying confreres for special training in Spiritan studies: EGC underlined some criteria for selection of confreres for the training; send out a second letter on this indicating the criteria for selection of suitable confreres. Other points that came up: encourage confreres to constantly update their knowledge of Spiritan spirituality and traditions; set up a mobile team to undertake the work of animating confreres and lay people who are interested in Spiritan spirituality; watch out for the continuity and unity of our Spiritan for-

mation; the possibility of distance learning on the web was also raised.

Communicating the Spiritan charism: The Centre for Spiritan Studies has undertaken the task of digitising Spiritan material at Duquesne University library; the first Volume of '*Anthologie Spiritaine*' has been completed in French and the translations into Portuguese and English are on the way; encourage production of publications and pamphlets in the three languages; the question is whether to do it centrally or do we ask each circumscription to do their own; use radio and television where possible.

Beatification/canonisation of our founders: pray through the intercession of our founders; live and make known their spirituality; introduce the life of our founders in catechetical programmes; create popular movements in their honour; send to Rome a clear presentation of favours received; be more convinced of their cause; more leadership in this is needed from the Generalate.

Logo of the Congregation: two groups at the EGC were in favour of having one logo only; one group was in favour of creativity; having a logo with a Marian element in it was supported by all; it is understood that the original logo will remain as the official seal of the Congregation.

3.2 SPIRITAN LIFE AND VOCATION

3.2.1 Brothers

Observation: During the EGC when the question of the brothers was being dealt with a document produced by Carmo, a brother, on the early history of the brothers in Libermann's time was eagerly received by the confreres. There seems to be a desire among members of the Congre-

gation to know more about the history of the brothers. In the synthesis of the reports from the work groups it also seems evident that more needs to be known about this vocation. There is much anecdotal and archive material about the brothers in the Congregation but perhaps there is a need for a more scientific historical work to be written. Could the GC commission such a work?

- The first point that seems obvious from all the work that has been done on the question of the brothers is that we want brothers in the Congregation. "Our Congregation needs brothers for its mission".
- In all of the findings including those of the EGC it is clear that a number of major obstacles prevent the flourishing of this vocation: lack of any Spiritan vocations in parts of the world, too much emphasis on sacramental, parochial ministry, lack of understanding of this vocation, strange ecclesiologies in the heads of confreres who cannot see what ministry a Spiritan who is not ordained can possibly do, lack of vocations animation in relation to the brother's vocation, lack of publicity about this way of being Spiritan, clerical exclusiveness and simply clericalism. From this list it seems obvious that a serious change of mentality is required especially if we hope to get the vocation to brotherhood off the ground in the circumscriptions which enjoy a flourishing of Spiritan vocations, but there are also practical things that can be done to improve the situation. The way forward is surely to focus on the positive suggestions coming from the EGC.
- In the first place a Spiritan brother is a Spiritan confrere, a missionary religious and this needs to be emphasised in a variety of ways:

- giving due solemnity and attention to religious profession (not only of the brothers);
 - celebrating the jubilees of religious profession;
 - suppressing high-sounding titles like “Holy Ghost Fathers”, “Peres du St. Esprit”, “Padres do Espirito Santo”.
- Vocation ministry:

It is in the young circumscriptions where we still have many vocations that we must make the greatest effort for the greater visibility of our “missionary being” which cannot be reduced to the sacramental ministry of the priest. The General Council needs to have a policy of constantly reminding the superiors and circumscriptions about the brothers and the need for constant publicity, vocation animation and general appreciation of the brothers. Since we began our dialogue with the membership of the Congregation about the brothers, the topic has certainly emerged from the darkness and been given attention and publicity (in publications and vocation leaflets etc.). The EGC also asked that “the topic of the brothers would be taken into account in debates, meetings and circumscription assemblies”. We of the GC can help with this in our visits to circumscriptions, formation communities, assemblies, chapters etc and in our own publications. Another proposal from the EGC was that the next meeting organised by the Congregation dealing with formation should be devoted to “the topic of the brother’s vocation”. It could figure as part of a wider agenda.

1. Mission: “Our vision for mission is realised under three forms of vocation: priest, brother, lay associate.” What is clear from the reports of the work

groups is that the brother is like any other Spiritan confrere at the heart of Spiritan mission which is the mission of the Church. Negatively it was said that “the parish structure based on sacramental economy does not help much to give visibility to the brother’s vocation”. Another affirmation was that “we need to be clear first of all on the preferences and options to be made for the mission of the brother in order to then envisage and propose an adequate formation”. It was also suggested to “propose certain concrete services provided by brothers at present, to inspire the formation of future brothers”. This is a bit vague, but we can imagine what people have in mind, for example brothers who are highly competent in professional fields, like medicine, architecture, engineering etc and who also bring another special dimension to their work because they are religious and Spiritans. There is a debate which was not so present in the EGC as to whether we should have works specifically manned by brothers which would give a clear visibility to the brothers. This is very much an African idea at present. Some European brothers get angry with this idea because it seems to continue the separation of the brothers and the fathers. It was also seen as desirable to have brothers in all key positions in the Congregation where they can function competently including administration and formation.

2. Formation: “We need to propose an adequate missionary, religious and professional formation.” It is true that our formation is meant to prepare us for lifelong community life and not just the acquisition of professional skills. “Redefine our cycles of formation including a common sector”. “Our formation is too

rigid, with too much insistence on direction rather than accompaniment." By "too rigid" it is not so clear what is meant but it could be that our formation is too uniform and does not take adequate account of the diversity of mission situations to which we are called nor the diversity of talents of those who are called.

3. Community life: The EGC insisted on inclusiveness and a balance of attention to the vocation of brother and father. The wish was voiced that "the brothers would know how to position themselves as full members (and not members completely apart) of the Congregation, and that they would be completely integrated with no complex". This will require us to "combat individualism and promote equality of economic treatment; mass stipends for example are not personal money, but income for the community and must be put in the common kitty". "Brothers and lay Associates should be given posts of responsibility in the Congregation. Specify what is common to all and that which is proper to the priest, brother and lay associate".
- Other suggestions:

Get inspiration from what other Congregations are doing to solve this problem;

As a GC we can make sure that the brother has a clear place in the preparation and realisation of the next General chapter, ensuring that there is a brother delegate at least.

3.2.2 Confreres in Irregular Situations (TA 1.3.8)

The document on this subject was well received; but there are still confreres in such situations and some pressure must be put on superiors during Visitations to call them to book without them embarking on a 'witch hunt'. The General Council will continue to help confreres and Superiors involved in such situations as much as it can.

3.3 QUESTIONS LINKED TO FORMATION

INTRODUCTION

After taking note of the Congregation's statistics regarding initial formation, the members of the EGC 2008 reflected on the following 3 topics: the contents and evaluation of formation, 2nd cycle formation and the formation of formators. Their contribution strengthens the work of the General Council in implementing the orientations of Torre d'Aguilha 2004. This will be particularly useful for the updating of The Guide for Spiritan Formation.

3.3.1 Content and Evaluation

- It is necessary to ensure that we have formation in a way that will help people to integrate themselves, outside academic work, Spiritan life, spiritual life, pastoral activities etc, formation should be wider than intellectual. *Question:* Are our formators numerous enough and equipped to provide this?
- It is necessary to use the updated Guide for Formation. *Action:* Let's do this (GC).
- Assessment is necessary for formation. *Action:* Formators need training for this.

- We should consider the criteria given by the Church for ordination (cf. Vatican documents). *Question*: Do people know what these criteria are?
- Debriefing/re-reading of *stage* experience: “the formator shall help the candidate to evaluate and re-read the programme so as to better understand the missionary life”. The formator needs the skill to do this.
- EGC stated that certain practical aspects of mission, like pastoral work are lacking in our formation. *Action*: Put in place subjects that will complement studies in consortia, universities etc. for example, missiology, practical matters etc. *Warning*: The trouble with some of these things is that they are not meant to be separate subjects so much as part of the way everything is done for example, missiology, anthropology and ecumenism.
- Evaluation and assessment are important as they focus on human development. The problem is too many students and too few formators. Divide it into ways that suit each stage of formation. *Action*: Take seriously the reports written about students.
- Spiritual formation: The GC is working on this. These formation courses need to be defined more extensively to ensure a common identity for future Spiritans.
- Initial formation gives a way of working but cannot give everything; each candidate should be accompanied in his own way.
- The council and formation team of circumscriptions must have confidence in the formation given. The formator should give a report about students during the formation at every stage.

CONCLUSION:

Almost all of the points listed above (from EGC) imply that in formation:

- We have an adequate number of formators in relation to the number of students;
- Formators accompany the students individually;
- Formators have acquired the skills to conduct pastoral placement reflection, one-to-one formation dialogue, systematic assessment, good and frequent communication with students and the administration, to coordinate the provision of the extra subjects, areas not covered in the curriculum in consortia etc.
- It is also implied that formators have acquired the capacity to train the students in Spiritan spirituality and use the means provided by the Congregation for this.

In brief, the challenge to the Congregation is to provide enough suitable and properly trained formators.

3.3.2 Centralisation of Second Cycle

The General Chapter of Torre d'Aguilha asked for a feasibility study to be done regarding the centralisation of second cycle formation in the Congregation. The information given to the participants at the EGC presented two possibilities, with their advantages and disadvantages.

1. A centralised second cycle according to the model of the Unions of circumscriptions.
2. A second cycle totally under the responsibility of the General Council.

It is the first possibility which is presently operating in the Congregation, where the second cycle communities are

gathered geographically according to the Unions of circumscriptions. The members of the Enlarged General Council were in favour of this model for the future. It is a demanding arrangement, because it means the circumscriptions have to work more closely together in sharing their finances and personnel.

- Superiors in particular need to make sure that the formation team is international in character
- The members of the EGC asked that the Unions of circumscriptions, in collaborating in this way, put together a common Formation Guide
- They also asked that new second cycle communities be opened only in case of necessity - where students are too numerous, or where there has been an evolution in the circumscriptions for example.

These arrangements in no way lessen the role of the General Council. The members of the EGC asked that the General Council continue to play its part in the matter of formation.

- The General Council must clarify the general rules for running the second cycles. In particular it needs to give its agreement on the formation orientations (SRL 105). To do this it needs to accompany the whole initial process of reflection.
- Given the fact that a large number of our second cycle students do their courses in consortia or seminaries directed by non-Spiritans, a greater vigilance is required to ensure that the elements of Spiritan formation are covered.

Visitation of these communities of second cycle formation is the privileged means used by the General Council to carry out this accompaniment and vigilance.

3.3.3 Formation of Formators

The members of the Enlarged General Council recognised that the formation of formators is one of the priorities of the Congregation today. The quality of the formation of candidates for the Spiritan life depends on it. Many confreres take up specialisations which demand long years of study, but very few are trained in vocational discernment and the accompaniment of our young confreres. It is precisely on this point that we now need to make greater effort.

Choice of Formators

According to SRL 105.2 it is for circumscription Superiors to choose the formators and to give them the opportunity to be trained before they begin their work. In the context of the Unions of circumscriptions, the Superiors concerned collaborate in the discernment and choice of formators for the formation communities for which they are collectively responsible.

Centres of Formation

Many circumscriptions already receive confreres for specialised studies. It would be better if they make the formation of formators a priority and offer financial help for their studies before giving it for others. The Co-ordinator for Formation at the Generalate will put together a list of centres which offer suitable courses for formators and the necessary conditions.

The Role of the General Council

It was the mind of the Enlarged General Council that the General Council gives its opinion about the choice of all formators. In practice this is something difficult to do, so it requests that all those who will be responsible for formation

communities do a course in preparation for it and in these cases the General Council will make its views known.

Financing the Formation of Formators

The Enlarged General Council expressed the wish that a means be found to fund the formation of formators; this cannot be done from the funds of “Cor Unum” because this is already insufficient to support initial formation. As well as scholarships offered by some circumscriptions, the General Council will try to find extra funding from agencies which might be in a position to help.

3.4 LAY SPIRITANS / LAY ASSOCIATES

SRL 24.3: *In some places those who are working with us wish to be associated with us. We welcome them with joy, inviting them to share our spirituality and our apostolic life. The conditions of their acceptance and their work are decided at the level of each circumscription. In every case there is a written agreement.*

SRL 135.1: *The Congregation also offers a formation to its associates.*

SRL 247.1.19: *Certain decisions require the deliberative vote of the council of the circumscription: (...) the signing of a contract with an associate member.*

TORRE D’AGUILHA 2004: *“New circumscriptions will be attentive to the importance of lay associates and will support their development” (4.12).*

“To accomplish this (collaboration in shared missionary projects), the older circumscriptions rely on the solidarity of the Spiritan family, both professed and lay. For their part, they will continue, as far as they can, to give their own support to the rest of the Congregation” (5.4.2).

ITEMS PRESENTED FOR THE CONSIDERATION OF THE EGC 2008

3.4.1 A New Direction in Church and In Congregation

- Mission is not an activity of the Church. It is its essence.
- The laity lives its mission in the world (*Evangelii Nuntiandi* and *Christifideles Laici* (1988)).
- Mission is the way to holiness.
- At the start of the XX1 century the Spirit of the Lord is about to open new ways of sharing the mission of the Church with the laity. *"A new chapter, full of hope, is opened in the story of the relationship between religious and laity"* (V.C.56).
- Formation, a challenge for Religious and Laity.
- *"Lay Spiritans are a branch of the Spiritan tree"* (TA 11.2).
- *"The laity bring to the Spiritan community, an energy which comes from their presence in and understanding of the world."* (T.A.11.1).
- In accordance with the degree of spiritual proximity and missionary commitment, we can distinguish:
 - friends of the Spiritans who, in various ways, collaborate in our mission;
 - lay people who feel attracted by the spirituality of our founders and by our mission and belong to prayer and reflection groups;
 - "lay associates" who desire a deeper commitment in the Congregation and who, after a time and a course of specific formation, sign a contract of association.
- *"In certain contexts, the laity prefer to be called 'Lay Spiritans' in general, while reserving the title 'Lay Associates' for*

those who sign a formal contract with the circumscription which receives them " (T.A.11.2).

3.4.2 Lay Spiritans – Questionnaire November 2007

A questionnaire, about Lay Spiritans¹, dated November 15th 2007, was sent to Superiors along with a letter. Among objectives outlined were: to organise a data base with up to date information regarding Lay Spiritans; allow the EGC 2008 to analyse and reflect on the actual situation of Lay Spiritans in the Congregation; provide an opportunity for the circumscriptions to take note of the present situation as regards the question of Lay Spiritans; send out a challenge to circumscriptions still far from realising that "*Lay Spiritans are a branch of the Spiritan tree*" (TA 11.2); avail of the more detailed knowledge about Lay Spiritans so as to find there inspiration to reinforce, solidify, evaluate, invent or initiate ways for lay people to take part in the life of the Congregation, in the belief that this would bring unexpected and fruitful insights of some aspects of our charism and awaken new apostolic dynamism.

Sixteen circumscriptions replied to the questionnaire.

From the debate during EGC 2008 it became clear, once more, that the presence and participation of the laity in Spiritan life is part of the patrimony of the Congregation. It is a richness marked by reciprocity in giving and receiving and by the diversity of its expressions. Lay Spiritans participated as invitees in the last three General Chapters. The acceptance on the part of confreres and of our communities of "*Lay Spiritans as a branch of the Spiritan tree*", does not seem to have met with significant disagreement.

¹ See Document 27 of EGC 2008 - Ariccia.

There is a multiplicity of forms of association within the life of the Congregation, diversity with regard to formation programs and deepening of spirituality, relationship with the communities and participation in concrete missionary programs.

One evident discovery is that it is, primarily, the older circumscriptions that are involved in this partnership with lay people in various forms. However, the General Council, through its contacts, knows that new experiences are taking place in various younger circumscriptions but these did not respond to the questionnaire, apart from some exceptions.

Torre d'Aguilha (11.2.) recognises and the questionnaire confirms that there are different levels of belonging to the "Spiritans Family", depending on the lay person's spiritual closeness and missionary commitment. If to this diversity we add the different terminology used we understand how difficult it is to classify the results or even to draw conclusions.

Names and numbers do not always point to the same reality except in the case of Lay Associates, that is, those who have a signed contract with the circumscriptions. But even then, there are lay people with a signed pledge (not a contract) and who do not consider themselves to be, and really are not, Lay Associates. There are circumscriptions which really have Lay Associates with a formation program and assignment to a mission but without a written contract. Others have all the requisites of Lay Associates but do not accept that term, preferring Lay Spiritans. Others think that to speak of Lay Spiritans is to usurp the status of Spiritan Brothers.

As for the Lay Associates, there are contracts made for one, two or three years, renewable. Is it possible to make a per-

manent contract? In some circumscriptions, yes, after six years. But what does this mean? Take an example; one lady is on mission *ad extra*, living in a Spiritan community. With a definitive contract, what is her relationship with the circumscription of origin when she returns there for good? There is also the case of associates who receive a salary from the circumscription. Could there be a possibility of confusion? And how about the cases of lay people who have administrative functions (bursars of circumscriptions or communities, provincial commissions of JPIC, members of formation communities ...) and by inherence are or should be part of juridical instances of the Congregation?

3.4.3 EGC 2008 – ECHOES

At present, concerning Laity in the Congregation, we have on the one hand a valuable inheritance, and on the other a diversity of understandings that somehow need to be brought together. In fact from the EGC we got more material for reflection rather than clear orientations.

Presently we have 105 Lay Associates registered at the General Secretariat who have a written contract with their circumscription. Many Spiritan Professed and Lay Spiritans do not feel comfortable with the fact the great richness and diversity of lay people sharing in the life and mission of the Congregation, is reduced to this number. On the other hand some would say that we should not be hindered by this diversity of forms of association, but only take into consideration what is foreseen in SRL 24.3, that is, a specific closer personal bond between individuals and the Congregation, through the local circumscription. But immediately a good number of people will object to this, saying that it is very unjust to alienate dozens of people, who have for many years experienced the Spiritan tradition and charism, and

have spiritual links with its mission. Collaborators without such a relationship could ask whether their manner of collaboration is somehow less valued than those with “contract of association”.

Torre d’Aguilha No.11 came to a sort of compromise by recognising various forms of association of lay people with the Congregation and members associated by formal and written contract.

SOME OTHER CONCERNS EXPRESSED AT THE EGC 2008

- To encourage the creativity of the different forms of association and belonging to the Congregation, namely in the circumscriptions where the initiatives are very few. To have some inspiring guidelines from the General Council
- It is still too early to come out with a General Directory as we are still not clear what we are talking about; let circumscriptions develop their groups, otherwise we may stifle the Spirit. Perhaps we could put together two documents: on the different kinds of collaboration with the Congregation and something more precise on contracts for those in a more formal situation vis-à-vis the Congregation.
- To present a Directory of Association to the Congregation, where the multiple and varied ways in which so many lay people have been linked with the Congregation for so many years, are officially recognised as authentically Spiritan. This is a question of justice as many have done excellent work concerning Spiritan mission. This Directory would greatly help circumscriptions to see the difference between different types of association

such as moral/spiritual contracts, letters sending on mission, civil contracts or work contracts.

- To look at the legal and canonical implications of having Associates; there have always been many groups linked to our Congregation and inspired by our spirituality but the crucial point is: can a lay person be a member of the Congregation without making profession?
- A 'Contract of Association' implies a spiritual link focused on mission with no canonical or legal implications; but what does 'definitive commitment' imply? In this case it is necessary to take into consideration the legal implications in each country.
- In some Provinces they are running important missionary projects and without them they would fail; the time is coming when they will want to participate in decision-making and voting also.
- For the moment it is better to remain as we are and wait to see what guidelines the General Council will be able to put together. However, it is urgent to clarify the different meanings of belonging, to insist on a formation programme (in the case of Lay Associates insisting also on a period of probation) and to aim at a more uniform terminology.
- To work up a document for submission at a General Chapter so that it can be included in the Directory for the Organisation of the Congregation and/or SRL. The Spiritan Rule of Life will need to be changed if Associates are to be considered as members of the Congregation. Only a General Chapter can do this.
- A question of social justice supposes that the conditions of work of Lay Associates are specified: if he/she works

for the Congregation, the Congregation must offer some social covering.

- Some lay people regard themselves as ‘Spiritans’, others say this is not correct. There are some divisions among Lay Spiritans/Lay Associates themselves: some want their commitment to be more definitive, others want it to be left unclear.

The 3 lay people present at Torre d’Aguilha stated clearly that they were not anxious about the formal dimension of their relationship with the Congregation: *“We are not at the end of the journey of reflection regarding our identity and our place in the heart of the Congregation”* (TA 11.3).

3.4.4 2008-2012: Lay Spiritans / Lay Associates Towards a More Unified Vision

From the EGC/2008, it became clear that what the Congregation is called to do in the next four years concerning the association of lay people with our charism, is to appreciate the rich inheritance we have, and to manage its diversity in such a way as to arrive at a unified vision

Different Forms of Association

To respond today to the pressing needs of our mission, many hands are needed. Collaboration in mission is the way we respond to this situation through complementarity of diverse calls and mutual responsibility for the mission of Christ.

This suggests that we invest in the creation of associations/groups inspired by Spiritan Spirituality. We note with joy the existence of many groups/associations (youth, adults, missionary volunteers, Spiritan alumni ...) with whom the Congregation shares a spiritual bond, the fruit of

which is mutual spiritual enrichment and service to the mission.

Torre d'Aguilha stated: *“new circumscriptions will be attentive to the importance of lay associates and will support their development”* (4.12).

3.4.4.1 Recommendations for the Next Four Years

- We encourage and support, at the different levels of the Congregation and in all circumscriptions, the creation and promotion of groups/movements of lay people associated and inspired by the Spiritan charism.
- 2009/2010. Each circumscription works out a **common letter for Lay Spiritans** in order to give a common vision of identity and service to groups/associations inspired by the Spiritan charism/spirituality. The aim of this is to arrive at a Vision/Mission Statement of what it means to be a Lay Spiritan, while respecting fully the specific nature and autonomy of each group/movement.
- 2011/2012. To reach a **common letter for Lay Spiritans** at the level of each Union of Circumscriptions.
- General Chapter 2012: evaluation.

3.4.4.2 Lay Spiritan Associates (with a written contract according to SRL. 24.3; 247.1.19)

- 2009/2010. Each circumscription, after approval by its Council, sends its Directory/Guide for Lay Spiritan Associates to each circumscription of its Union.
- 2010/2011 (July). The Unions work out a common **Directory/Guide for Lay Spiritan Associates**.
- 2011/2012. Working up of a single document.

- General Chapter 2012. Presentation of the final version of the **Directory/Guide for Lay Spiritan Associates**.

Items for this Directory/Guide of Lay Spiritan Associates:

- *Forward: Association in Church, Congregation, our Circumscription/Union.*
- *Lay Spiritan Identity: vocation, spirituality, community, and mission ...*
- *Formation Programme. Content and Method.*
- *Criteria of discernment to become a Lay Associate.*
- *Mutual expectations:*
 - From the Congregation*
 - From the Associates*
- *Relationship with the Congregation. Mission letter.*
- *Meaning of membership*
- *Official commitment. Nature of the contract: legal, spiritual and mission focused.*
- *Finances.*
- *Outreaches.*

IV. PREPARATION FOR GENERAL CHAPTER 2012

4.1 GENERAL ORIENTATIONS

The EGC was very positive about the suggestion of the General Council concerning the celebration of the next General Council. These suggestions need to be put into practice now, taking into account the opinions expressed at the EGC.